

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002598

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INR/R/MR, NEA/PPD, NEA/PPA, NEA/AGS, INR/IZ,  
INR/P

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQ, U.S. WITHDRAWAL,  
CONSTITUTION; BAGHDAD

¶1. SUMMARY: The major themes in the daily newspapers on June. 19 were Al-Jafari's visit to Kuwait, military operations in Al-Qa'im and Al-Thar Thar, and the Brussels conference. END SUMMARY.

-----  
TABLE OF CONTENTS  
-----

- ¶A. "Failure is not an option in Iraq" (Asharq Al-Awsat, 6/19)  
¶B. "Human rights are an important theme in drafting the constitution" (Al-Ittihad, 6/19)

-----  
SELECTED COMMENTARIES  
-----

- ¶A. "Failure is not an option in Iraq" (Asharq Al-Awsat, 6/19)

Asharq Al-Awsat (independent, London-based, has wide circulation in Iraq) published a ninth-page editorial by Abdul Rahman Al-Rashid about the situation in Iraq:

"American Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, a man of Afghan origin who was moved from Kabul to Baghdad, has recently stated that failure in Iraq is not an option. However, neither he nor his superiors in Washington have explained the meaning of failure. Because of the continued loss of human lives, there have been some doubts about whether the U.S. forces will continue to remain in Iraq. The continued deterioration of the security situation has led some U.S. congressional members to demand a timetable for the withdrawal of American forces from Iraq.

Not only is failure in Iraq possible, it is imminent. The question that remains is what will be the magnitude of the American loss? Will it be the loss of 2,000 soldiers in just two years? What will happen if this number reaches ten or even thirty thousand? What will happen if the number of attacks increases and new groups join the insurgency? What will happen if the Iraqi people continue to disagree with each other, thus proving that the country cannot be stabilized? Historical experiments have demonstrated that anything is possible in the Middle East, including failure. If the U.S. departs Iraq defeated, it will likely lose its dominance in the world and perhaps lose its presence in other countries. The U.S. will become just like any other small country that can be defeated easily. Indeed, the American position in the world will be weak and Washington will lose the trust of its friends.

The new American Ambassador stated that failure in Iraq is not an option. Yet, we must declare that achieving success is not so easy. During the Vietnam War, Washington repeated that it would not leave the country until South Vietnam won the war. However, the U.S. left Vietnam after the communists took control of Saigon. At that time, the Americans were trying to catch the last fleeing helicopters from the roof of the Embassy. If you were to ask Henry Kissinger about that terrible defeat, he would say that the Americans lost Vietnam but stopped the Left from controlling all of Southeast Asia. Nonetheless, the cost of failure in Iraq is higher than in Vietnam because Iraq's oil is much more important than Vietnam's rice.

The U.S. defeat in Iraq will be the end of an empire. Most Iraqi politicians, except for those of the Muslim Scholars Association, realize that the early withdrawal of U.S. forces from Iraq will threaten the internal situation and may push the country into civil war. This war will be terrible and similar to the Serbian war on Bosnia and Kosovo. A decade ago in the Balkans, the world asked for American intervention to stop the ugly massacres that were occurring. From that time until now, the situation in the Balkans has been under control. The Iraqi people deserve a chance to enjoy stability and they deserve to run their own internal affairs, without the need for American troops. This must be an Iraqi decision, not one made by the Arabs who are living away from the fire."

1B. "Human rights are an important theme in drafting the constitution" (Al-Ittihad, 6/19)

Al-Ittihad (affiliated with PUK led by Jalal Talabani) published a third-page editorial by Abdul Hadi Mahdi about the constitution:

"On April 9th, 2003, many voices appeared from the cracks that began calling for human rights. In the past, it was forbidden to speak about this issue because it did not conform with the policies of the former regime. Thus, any discussion on human rights was artificial and far from its real meaning. For decades, human rights were violated in all Iraqi cities. Today, there are many associations and organizations that have expressed their interest in human rights. However, the concept of human rights is not as easy as some people may think. In reality, these concepts are extensive and include aspects of several different fields that must be discussed in order to obtain a full understanding of human rights.

The leaders and members of these organizations must be highly educated so that they can overcome obstacles that may hinder them in accomplishing their goal of establishing effective human rights organizations. Iraq is full of reliable human rights activists that have dedicated their lives to promoting the rights of the Iraqi people. The constitutional committee has recently begun to draft the permanent constitution. Undoubtedly, human rights will be an important theme for the constitution drafting process because it is now time to correct the violations that have plagued the past.

The constitution is the primary law of the country and it must guarantee all rights. We must disseminate the culture of human rights in order to understand its concepts. This can be accomplished by providing specialized staffs in human rights to teach the subject in universities and other academic arenas. We should take the subject of human rights and turn it into an academic curriculum. In addition, we must hold human rights forums for governmental employees in all provinces. We must encourage civil society organizations to participate in these forums and conduct media campaigns to educate the Iraqi people about human rights because they must be accompanied by commitments."

JEFFREY